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ADVERTISEMENTS

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ED. FROSSARD, IRVINGTON, N. Y.

Editor and Proprietor.

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ADVERTISEMENTS, LIMITED TO 3 LINES, 25c. each insertion.

THE Mionnet scale of measurement for coins and medals may now be considered as entirely superceded in France and other European countries by the more convenient and far more exact scale of *millimeters*. Much might be said in favor of the adoption of the same scale by the Numismatic Societies and authorities of the United States and Canada, and very little, we believe, against it. The columns of "Numisma" are open for the discussion of the subject, and we invite contributions from those who feel sufficiently interested to give our readers their views.

THERE are several ways of making collections of coins; one, is to pay for them; another to be suddenly seized with a strong attack of kleptomania, when in close proximity to valuable coins, as was the case during the last sale in New York, when Nos. 715 and 716 of the catalogue were surreptitiously removed, much to the chagrin of Mr. Cogan and of various buyers who had amazingly high bids on the same; still another is to style yourself a "Publisher" and to send east and west, north and south for the finest and rarest coins, and when an unsuspecting dealer, in the innocence of his heart, sends you his choicest specimens, coolly inform him that you are impecunious, irresponsible, a minor, and that you have lost them while out on a coon hunt! This last method has been successfully practised by Mr. C. B. (*not A. B. C.*) Thompson, of Bridgewater, Conn. We forbear divulging the names of the now dejected company of coin dealers whom this promising youth drew into his confidence, but are not averse to a candid acknowledgment on our part that *some of our coins were lost in that hunt.*

WE will execute orders for the Ponce de Leon collection and make judicious selections at catalogue prices, free of charge to our subscribers and correspondents.

OUR readers undoubtedly remember the numerous expeditions organized in 1874, to observe, in both hemispheres, and from one pole to the other the transit of Venus over the disk of the sun. In view of the striking successes obtained by the French expeditions, the Academy of Sciences ordered that a medal should be struck to perpetuate the recollection of this astronomical event.

In consequence of a public competition established by the commission, M. Alpheo Dubois, was charged with the engraving of the medal, and this was awarded, in February last, to each member of the Academy, as well as to the different observers of the transit, and to various Numismatic societies. The design of the medal is as follows: Venus, under the guise of a beautiful female figure, passes before the sun, represented by a youth driving a quadriga. Behind the youth's head, a blazing sun casts its radiance in every direction. Science, (a seated female figure) observes the phenomenon from the earth, and takes note of the event. The motto by M. Egger, of the Academie des Inscriptions et Belles lettres, while explaining the subject, indicates its whole import. IVNCTA QUO DISTENT SPATIO SIDERA IVNCTA DOCENT, i. e. The planets by their conjunction tell us of the space which separates them.—

WE extract the following from the account of an interview between a newspaper man and General Grant, just previous to the latter's retirement from the White House:

"The President, when the agent entered his office, was assorting and binding such papers as he intended to retain, while fragments of others were profusely scattered on the floor. Two ancient looking Indian medals—one of copper and the other of silver—seemed to be valued by him very highly. The silver one bore the bust of Washington in slight relief, and on the opposite side was a representation of clasped hands. This medal had descended from the days of Washington to the chief who two years ago presented it to the President as a mark of profound respect, and in gratitude for his peace policy. The President in return presented the chief with a silver medal bearing his own likeness."

OUR EXCHANGES.

THE CURIOSITY HUNTER is evidently conducted by a gentleman, who considers lawful game anything that savors of the rare, the odd, or the curious. Being ourselves similarly afflicted, we extend to him our right hand of fellowship, and wish him success. Published by D. A. K. Andrus, Belvidere, Ill.

HARZFIELD'S NUMISMATIC CIRCULAR. No. 1, April 1877, contains an extended list of ancient coins *actually* in the possession of the publisher, and offered by him at very reasonable prices. The next number will contain list of modern medals and coins, many never previously offered in the United States. We consider the issuing of such circulars as steps in the right direction and of great benefit to collectors. Published by S. K. Harzfeld, 1713 Park Ave., Phila., Pa., and mailed free on application.

DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE of United States and Foreign copper coins, published by Frank S. Lusk, Cleveland, Ohio, price 20 cents, contains well arranged lists of such coins as are mostly in demand among collectors of miscellaneous pieces and American coppers.

PRICE LIST OF CURIOSITIES, Minerals, Coins, Indian relics, etc.; published by R. W. Mercer, 117 West 6th St., Cincinnati, Ohio; mailed free on receipt of stamp. Mr. Mercer is so well known among buyers of Indian curiosities, both of the mound builders and modern, that our encomium may be deemed superfluous. Since the late Indian campaign, he has added largely to his stock and is said to have sufficient murderous weapons, tomahawks, bowie knives, etc., to give Sitting Bull and his brave followers a complete outfit when next they tread the war path.

COIN SALES.

One of the best attended sales ever held in New York was that of the 12th and 13th ulto; being part of the collection of Mr. Jenks, of Philadelphia, offered by Mr. Ed. Cogan, at Bangs & Co. The 949 lots brought \$3237.00, or an average of \$3.40 for each number. Seventeen uncirculated cents bought on behalf of one collector averaged \$20 each. A Nova Cæsarea cent with date under the beam sold for \$125. The pattern and proof pieces brought exceptionally high

prices, and in fact, no part of the catalogue seemed to be neglected. We congratulate Mr. Cogan upon the financial success of this sale.

The next sale in New York will be of a miscellaneous collection of American and Foreign Coins, and will probably take place on the 18th and 19th inst. Catalogued by Edward Cogan.

In Philadelphia Mr. John W. Hazeltine will offer on the 21st and 22d inst., a fine collection of coins, including many very rare medals, and some unusually fine silver.

ONE of the most convenient and useful accessories in our sanctum, is the B. B. letter file. Its arrangement is such that letters can be filed and removed instantaneously and without the least difficulty. We strongly recommend it to our readers and correspondents. Manufactured by Brower Brothers, New York.

RUSSIAN COINS.

But little has ever been written in description of the Russian coinage, and this little is scattered through numerous books of travels which are often difficult of access, and but few coin collectors would ever think of consulting them. For the convenience of those who are collecting Russian coins we will give a short but comprehensive synopsis of their history from the introduction of coinage in the 13th century to the present time.

As the commerce of Russia for centuries consisted solely in the exchange of merchandise, the want of coined money was not felt. Large payments could be made in ingots, while furs were sufficient for local and daily wants. It is presumable that had the Tartars not invaded Russia, the Russians would have continued for a long time this primitive mode of exchange. But the yoke which the Tartars imposed upon Russia rendered the coinage of money imperative. The tribute which the various princes were obliged to pay, forced them to levy taxes upon their subjects, which could no longer be paid in furs but in coined money. The Russians, therefore, adopted a coinage in imitation of that of the Tartars. This continued in use until the reign of Peter the Great. Up to the reign of this Monarch gold was not current in Russia. The princes only could use it to strike medals.

The coinage of silver was probably begun in 1240, immediately after the second great invasion of the Tartars under Batou Khan. Before this invasion the Tartars had a coinage of their own which they seemed to have adopted from some previously conquered nation. Now, as all the money first struck by the Russians was intended for these conquerors the style and denomination of the Tartarean money were naturally adopted. The first pieces were called *Dengui*, in the singular, *Denga* or *Tenga*. Two dengui were worth one *Copeck*. The form of the denga is oblong and irregular, although some of the earlier pieces are nearly round. These little Russian pieces offer a great variety of types. Sometimes we find the portrait of the prince on horseback holding a falcon or brandishing a sword. Often the prince is seated on a throne; and again we find Sampson and the lion. It is remarkable of this coinage that every goldsmith had the right to strike money and could employ any type he wished.

Upon a number of these pieces are Arabic inscriptions, while others are bilingual, that is to say, have on the obverse an Arabic or Tartarean inscription, and on the reverse a Russian one. But a small number of these Arabic inscriptions have any real signification, the greater part of them having been chosen at random by the coiner, in order to facilitate their circulation among the Tartars. Under the Grand Dukes, Ivan Vasiliievitch and Vasili Ivanovitch, the single type of a horseman holding a sword was adopted for the Copeck, and the grand duke on horseback holding a lance, for the Denga. This remained unchanged until the reign of Peter the Great.

Copper coins were also issued before the reign of Peter the Great, but it is impossible to fix the date of their emission. They were called *Pouli*, one hundred of which worth a Denga.

When Peter the Great ascended the throne he resolved to establish a new monetary system; national mints were built at Moscow in 1701, and at St. Petersburg in 1703, foreign engravers were procured and the money was struck with more care.

Gold ducats were first struck for circulation in 1701 and each successive reign has seen new issues. Three years later (1704) Peter the Great introduced the coinage of the silver *rouble*. The type on the obverse is the head

of the Czar and on the reverse the double headed Imperial eagle, with an inscription. Silver half and quarter roubles were also struck as well as pieces of 3 copecks (Altyns) and one copeck.

The want of small change in Russia prior to this reign forced the people to cut the copecks in pieces, thus making halves and quarters of copecks. Peter immediately upon his accession ordered the coinage of copper pieces called Dengui and Polouchki, the former containing two of the latter.

The system of Peter continued in operation until the year 1832, when the copper coinage underwent a great change, the old denominations being dropped, and that of copecks adopted for all the fractions of the rouble both in silver and copper. The rouble became the unit value of the currency, and was divided into 100 copecks. Pieces were struck in silver of 1 1-2 and 1 rouble, 75, 50, 30, 25, 20, 15 and 5 copecks. In copper, 10, 5, 3, 2, 1, 1-2 and 1-4 copecks.

In 1828, Nicholas I caused pieces of 3, 6, and 12 roubles to be struck in platina, which metal had recently been discovered in the Urals. The coinage was however soon discontinued on account of the difficulty in fusing the metal. At present paper money is used exclusively in Russia, silver and gold commanding high premiums. R. H. L.

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